

MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING OF
CITY OF ALAMEDA FILM COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2008
3:00 PM

(This meeting was held at Room 156, City Hall West, 950 West Mall Square)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Duffin called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Duffin. Commission Members: Collins-Levi, Copperwaite, Dorrance, Grey, Laven, Tabor, and Walker

Absent: Commission Members: Gray, Green, and Lowell

Staff: Commission Secretary: Sue G. Russell
Commission Recording Secretary: Rosemary Valeska

2. MINUTES

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 19, 2008

Motion (Dorrance), seconded, and unanimous to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2008 Regular Meeting as submitted.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

(None)

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC *(For discussion of items not on the agenda – please file a Speaker's Slip with the Recording Secretary.)*

Public speaker (1): Terri Wright, Community Development Program Manager for the City of Alameda. Ms. Wright distributed informational literature to the Commission Members about an award winning film that was produced about homelessness called *Where God Left His Shoes*, starring John Leguizamo. (Copies are attached to these minutes for reference.) EveryOneHome, a homeless services non-profit agency serving Alameda County, and also local Alameda homeless providers, is looking into arranging a benefit screening of this film at either the Alameda or Grand Lake Theatre. The Commission Members expressed enthusiasm about having this screened at the Alameda Theatre. Motion (Copperwaite), seconded, and unanimous to agendize the endorsement and possible co-sponsorship of this event at the Film Commission's next meeting.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(None)

6. NEW BUSINESS

Presentation by Wilson Wu, Location Manager

Chairman Duffin introduced Mr. Wu. Mr. Wu stated that he had previously lived in Alameda and is very aware of what Alameda has to offer. He stated that the preferred residential area of Pasadena had become too expensive for filming, so he has used Alameda's Gold Coast as a substitute - it has nice homes, a flat terrain, and is located in a studio zone.

There has not been much work in San Francisco lately, so there is no spillover to benefit Alameda. TV commercials are now the "bread and butter" of film work. People need to realize that TV commercials work at a different pace than a TV series or a feature film. The City's Permit Division currently has a process wherein one can apply for a permit with a two-day guaranteed turn around without police or a ten-day guaranteed turn around with police. However, the City will not allow both permits to be applied for simultaneously.

He stated that he had a Ford commercial planned for Alameda Point. He really wanted police presence at the shoot; however, there was not enough time for a ten-day permit. Since traffic was relatively light in that area, he took a chance and went with a two-day permit. Fortunately, police were able to show up anyway.

He stated that there is a particular house on Bay Street that he likes to use. He had an Avis commercial that required a permit with police; however, City staff could not guarantee it within nine days. Therefore, this commercial had to be filmed in Berkeley, where the permit was issued within three days.

Ms. Russell noted that the two-day/ten-day requirement had been removed from the City's Municipal Code and now came under the category of "administrative regulation." She added that we will be working with Police and Fire to reduce the turn around to five days or less.

Mr. Wu also reported on his experience with a Sutter Health commercial that he wanted to film on Bay Street. AP& T construction work was scheduled for the block where the subject house is located. Mr. Wu stated that he repeatedly called AP&T to find someone who had the authority to arrange for the work to stop in front of the house for the period of time that the film crew needed to have sound. He stated that he went four to five days without a callback. He added that he had received dismissive treatment from AP&T's contractors at the job site. Mr. Wu finally contacted Commission Member Walker, who in turn contacted Chairman Duffin to help resolve things with AP&T. Contact was finally made with the AP&T General Manager, who stated that the AP&T's contractor would have to be paid regardless. The contractors initially demanded \$7,500 to cover one day's work. After some negotiating, a final agreement was reached for the production company to pay \$3,500 to compensate the contractor for half a day's work and the commercial was able to be filmed at the Bay Street house.

Mr. Wu stated that the Alameda Film Commission should work on expediting permits and get the word out; otherwise, location scouts won't want to come here. He commended our permit staff for his willingness to help; however, there's only so much

he can do under our current two-day/ten-day system, which discourages commercials from being filmed in Alameda. He added that the City of Oakland film office has been able to turn around a permit in one day.

He also cited Kathleen Dodge of the El Dorado County film office and Dale Kaye of the Livermore film office as being “champion” film commissioners. They are dialed in to their merchants. He noted that Ms. Kaye is also the Livermore Chamber Executive Director. Her husband is a retired Disney executive and she has been able to use his contacts to attract filming in the Livermore area. He referenced the “Sideways” effect on local economies. Mr. Wu stated that there needs to be a movement for a county wide film commission.

(Commision Members Laven and Tabor left the meeting at this time – 4:00 p.m.)

Chairman Duffin directed staff to set up a meeting with representatives of the City Manager’s office, Police, and Fire to help resolve the permit turn around issues. Mr. Wu indicated that he would like to participate in this meeting. Chairman Duffin also directed that a report be provided to the AP&T General Manager regarding the events that occurred. He also stated that he had been provided with a written time line of the events from one of Mr. Wu’s associates and that he would e-mail it to the Commission Members.

Mr. Wu noted that the City of Oakland was “killing” its film business due to a recently imposed law charging high parking fees for film crews. Oakland City Administration felt that since film crews were not spending money in Oakland, that parking was an area where that city could make some money.

Mr. Wu stated that all the communities would benefit from a county wide film commission. He added that Ms. Kaye has expressed an interest in meeting with Chairman Duffin. He added that the time for everyone to pull together is now, when the economy is not doing so well.

Chairman Duffin thanked Mr. Wu for his presentation.

7. REPORTS

7.a. Oral Report – Marketing Subcommittee

Chairman Duffin stated that due to Mr. Wu’s presentation, there would not be a Marketing Subcommittee report.

7.b. Oral Report – Locations Subcommittee

Commission Member Grey reported that a subcommittee meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss changes to the website. The main changes would be expansion of the photo slide show and removal of the interactive/upload feature.

7.c. Oral Report – Internal Operations Subcommittee

Ms. Russell stated that she would be setting up the meeting with police, fire, and other permit reviewers as previously discussed.

7.d. Oral Report – Hangar 12/Production Studio Subcommittee

Commission Member Copperwaite displayed images of brochure options on a laptop. The consensus was for the gold outer pages with blue inside pages. Motion (Walker), seconded and unanimous to accept the brochure as noted. The subcommittee expressed interest in a meeting with SunCal, perhaps at the old control tower.

8. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Russell distributed copies of the City's filming permits list covering the period of January through June 2008. (A copy is attached for reference.)

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

(None)

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue G. Russell
Film Liaison/Economic Development Coordinator

SGR:rv